

10% more diners at St. Anthony's

And more are getting back in line for seconds and thirds

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

“YOU can say this report was blessed by the mayor,” said the Rev. John Hardin of St. Anthony’s Foundation about the 78-page, not-quite-hot-off-the-press *San Francisco Plan to Abolish Homelessness*. Hardin had just concluded his presentation of the plan, published in mid-July, to Tenderloin Futures Collaborative members.

“YOU can say it’s blessed,” quipped the Faithful Fool’s Kurt Kuhwald, with no malice.

“We can all bless it,” came back Hardin, “and we can all do something to help by passing Prop. A, the housing bond.”

Homelessness and housing consumed much of the September Collaborative meeting.

The call for a plan to end homelessness by 2014 was one of Mayor Newsom’s first post-swearing actions. He named former Supervisor Angela Alioto to head up a Ten-Year Planning Council; Hardin was vice chair of the Outreach, Assessment and Behavioral Health Committee, one of five committees that comprised the council.

“It was an intense, five-month planning process,” Hardin said. “Our target was hardcore, chronic, visibly homeless people — the estimated 3,000 people who use 90% of our high-end services.”

After the meeting, The Extra pulled more facts from the report: Today’s S.F. homeless population is 15,000 — up from 12,000 two years ago — and 63% of the \$200 million that the city spends annually on homeless services goes to those 3,000 chronically homeless people. Goal No. 1 of the plan is to build 3,000 units of permanent, supportive housing so that no one would be discharged to the street from

any program, hospital, jail or other facility.

Traditional shelters would be phased out in the next four to six years and replaced with 24-hour clinics and “sobering centers” that would divert inebriates from high-cost emergency care.

A Collaborative member asked Hardin if St. Anthony’s stats reflect increased homelessness.

“Our client numbers went up 20% this January,” he said. “It’s leveled off since then, at 10% over last year. But what’s really changing is that more people in the dining room are self-defining themselves as homeless, and we’re seeing more people going through the line two or three times.”

Asked what he thought about the outreach teams that go looking for homeless people who might be eligible for Care Not Cash supportive housing, Hardin said: “I’ve told them to come to the jails. We can fill their housing immediately” — a reference to the fact that, according to the report, 90% of the chronically homeless “rotate through the jail system on a weekly or monthly basis. At any given time, 40% of the people in jail are homeless.”

Hardin said he also was concerned about what happens when homeless people are placed in SROs: “Isolation is a real problem. Their friends are still on the streets or elsewhere.” Support from longtime street pals, he suggested, is tangible and, perhaps, irreplaceable.

The lion’s share of the report — almost 40 pages — covers how to develop permanent supportive housing, and the acknowledgments take up another 23 pages. Not surprising: Between March and June this year, the Ten-Year Planning Council and its committees met 85 times; 785 people from more than 400 organizations participated in those meetings.

Among the plan’s advocacy recommendations: Support both state Proposition 63, the mental health services initiative, and the city’s Affordable Housing Bond, Prop. A. The Plan to Abolish Homelessness is online: <http://sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planningcouncil/news/TheSFPlanFinal.pdf>.

CARE NOT CASH UPDATE

In May, when Care Not Cash started officially, San Francisco had 2,500 homeless adults in the CAAP program, Scott Walton, Department of Human Services supportive housing manager, told the Collaborative.

CAAP, the County Adult Assistance Program, is a collective term for four independent city welfare programs that help people not entitled to state or federal benefits.

“By this November, 1,700 of the (CAAP recipients) will have been converted to the new housing program,” Walton said, “and by the end of the year, we expect to have 1,600 units available for them. We currently have 12 buildings in SoMa, the Tenderloin and the Mission.”

What does “converted” mean? Walton was asked.

“It means the homeless in the CAAP program have been offered permanent, county-subsidized housing — their CAAP cash benefits have been converted (to CAAP Benefits Package or CBP),” he answered.

CBP offers housing, food and services in lieu of benefits. Recipients still get a little cash — as little as \$59, but not less — after deducting the in-kind value of services.

Do the buildings have on-site support services? Food? Treatment for substance abuse and mental health problems? Walton was asked.

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

GOOD NEWS for...

SOME TENDERLOIN PROVIDER

S.F. Department of Public Health is again looking to fund agencies to do DUI prevention and education programs in their neighborhoods. Four groups would get \$9,990 each for 10-month projects that would run from Jan. 1-Oct. 31, 2005. Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club, Good Samaritan Family Resource Center, Potrero Hill Neighborhood House and the RAP Collective currently are operating programs with last year’s funding. “In 2005, we really want to get one of these programs in the Tenderloin,” said Nicamer Tolentino, DPH’s DUI prevention project coordinator. “No TL groups applied last year, but the process is easy — to be considered, you just have to answer three community-friendly questions.” Project ideas are due on Nov. 1. Information: 581-2420 or nicamer.tolentino@sfdph.org

SENIORS at Glide, St. Anthony’s and Presentation Senior Community, isolated from each other in the past, have formed new bonds, thanks to social activities at Boeddeker Park. It began when staff members from the three organizations met at a Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting and worked on the July 21 Children’s Parade, said Daniel O’Connor, St. Anthony’s community liaison. They organized an Aug. 20 ice cream social in the park that drew 120 of

seniors. Such outings demonstrated that the park is shaking off its “blighted and unsafe reputation,” O’Connor said. “We had six women from our Madonna Senior Residence attend the ice cream social who had been too afraid to ever go to the park.” Next: a bingo party for the three groups at the Madonna. Already, new relationships are being formed, “and that’s our intention,” says O’Connor. “We want to have regular activities together, and Boeddeker will continue to be a focus.”

TARC With a new \$15,000 grant from the Syringe Access Fund, Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center becomes the only syringe exchange program open on Sundays in San Francisco. The Access Fund, a Levi Strauss Foundation, Tides Foundation and National AIDS Fund collaboration, is an effort to reduce blood-borne diseases by making sterile syringes easier to obtain. The Fund is distributing \$1 million in grants in California, Florida, New Jersey, New York and Texas. TARC currently exchanges 6,000 syringes a month during its Wednesday evening syringe exchange. Adding a Sunday exchange will double that number and further reduce the spread of HIV and Hepatitis B and C. “Providing a basic service such as syringe exchange is an important component in getting injection drug-using residents to access care,” said Tracy Brown, TARC executive director. “The service can be the first opportunity in building a relationship with (them).” TARC is at 183 and 187 Golden Gate. Information: 431-7476 or visit www.tarcsf.org.

ENTERTAINMENT LOVERS Don’t miss the Luggage Store’s 10th annual In the Street Theater Festival, a weekend of saturated fun in the Tenderloin Sat. Oct 8, 5-10 p.m. and Sun. Oct 9, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. More than 100 local artists present aerial choreography, outdoor theater, hip hop and spoken word, circus acts, dance, puppets and interactive installations — all for free — in Cohen Alley and on the 500 block of Ellis between Leavenworth and Hyde. The Festival opens with Ledoh and Salt Farm’s “River of Sand,” a multimedia Butoh theater piece celebrating the sung poetry of the Ka-Ren people, a Southeast Asian hill tribe. “Performing ‘River of Sand’ in a neighbor-



The Dance Brigade, in Cohen Alley at the Luggage Store’s In the Street Theater Festival.

hood where many of the Southeast Asian diaspora have taken root allows the vine of traditional culture to wind its way through our new urban context,” said Salt Farm Artistic Director Lehoh. Info: 255-5971.

DENIZENS OF DISTRICT SIX This October marks the fifth anniversary of the formation of the Alliance for A Better District 6, an eclectic supervisorial district that takes in all of the Tenderloin, some of Hayes Valley, all of SoMa down to the Bay, Yerba Buena and Treasure Island. The Alliance schedules special presentations — on ballot measures, candidates, land trusts and traffic safety, among others — and maintains several message boards that provide timely information on pertinent issues. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/District6inSF> has 930 members. The Alliance’s Housing Committee meets monthly, drawing 50 or more tenant leaders who share experiences and resources, hear speakers, and discuss ways to maintain affordable housing and improve the quality of life in the district. Information: 820-1560.

— MARJORIE BEGGS AND TOM CARTER

This column needs regular infusions. If you have some good news (no events, please), send it to marjorie@studycenter.org.